

## Remarks at the Signing Ceremony for the Israeli-Palestinian West Bank Accord

September 28, 1995

*The President.* Prime Minister Rabin; Chairman Arafat; Your Majesty King Hussein; President Mubarak; Foreign Minister Peres; Mr. Abu Mazin; Prime Ministers Gonzalez, Filali, Bin Shakir; Foreign Minister Kozyrev, our cosponsor of the Middle East peace negotiations; distinguished Foreign Ministers and members of the Diplomatic Corps; and honored guests:

I welcome you to the White House for this milestone on the path to reconciliation. Today we make a great stride toward the fulfillment of a vision toward the day when two peoples divided by generations, by conflict, are bound now by peace. Finally, the time is approaching when there will be safety in Israel's house, when the Palestinian people will write their own destiny, when the clash of arms will be banished from God's Holy Land.

Two years ago, on another brilliant September day here at the White House, two men reached across one of history's widest chasms with a simple handshake. That moment is etched forever in our memory. With the eyes of the world upon you, Mr. Prime Minister, you declared your wish to live side by side with the Palestinian people in dignity, in empathy, as human beings, as free men. And you, Mr. Chairman, vowed to wage what you called the most difficult battle of our lives, the battle for peace.

In the days of labor that have followed, you have both shown profound courage in bringing us to this moment, and you have kept your word.

The enemies of peace have fought the tide of history with terror and violence. We grieve for their victims, and we renew our vow to redeem the sacrifice of those victims. We will defeat those who will resort to terror. And we revere the determination of these leaders who chose peace, who rejected the old habits of hatred and revenge. Because they broke so bravely with the past, the bridges have multiplied, bridges of communication, of commerce, of understanding. Today, the landscape changes and the chasm narrows.

The agreement that now will be signed means that Israel's mothers and fathers need no longer worry that their sons will face the dangers of

patrolling Nablus or confronting the hostile streets of Ramallah. And it means that Palestinians will be able to decide for themselves what their schools teach, how their houses should be built, and who they choose to govern.

You, the children of Abraham, have made a peace worthy of your great forebear. Abraham, patriarch of both Arabs and Jews, sacrificed power for peace when he said to his nephew, Lot, "Let there be no strife between thee and me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right." Patience and persistence, courage and sacrifice: These are the virtues, then as now, that set peacemakers apart.

Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. Chairman, you are showing that it is not by weapons but by will and by word that dreams best become reality. Your achievement shines as an inspiration to others all around this world who seek to overcome their own conflicts and to secure for themselves the blessings of peace.

Chapter by chapter, Jews and Arabs are writing a new history for their ancient lands. Camp David; the Declaration of Principles, signed here 2 years ago; the peace of the Arava last year between Jordan and Israel: With each of these, the truth of this book has become clear to the world. As courageous leaders stepped beyond the bounds of convention, they build for their peoples a new world of hope and peace.

Now, as this new chapter begins, it is fitting that we are joined by so many from the camp of peace. Egypt's President Mubarak has carried forth the commitment to peace that began with Anwar el-Sadat and the miracle at Camp David. Before there was a glimpse of a breakthrough, President Mubarak stood for reconciliation. And he added his strength, his personal strength, time and time again in the days of the negotiations.

Almost a year ago, on the border that had known only barbed wire and armed patrols, King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin brought their nations together in peace. Already that border has been transformed, as have the lives of Israelis and Jordanians, after 46 years as enemies. King Hussein stands a rock on which peace can be built. In only a few weeks, he

will host the economic summit in Amman that will bring together Israelis and Arabs from throughout the region, business and government leaders from throughout the world, to map the promise of tomorrow.

Today we are also joined by the largest group of Arab Foreign Ministers ever assembled to support the growth of peace. Prime Minister Filali of Morocco has traveled here to represent King Hassan, who has done so much to advance progress in the region. With us as well are representatives of nations that have provided vital support for peace, including the countries of the European Union, Japan, Canada, and of course, Norway, whose assistance 2 years ago opened the way to this moment.

All those who doubt the spirit of peace should remember this day and this extraordinary array of leaders who have joined together to bring a new era of hope to the Middle East. The United States is proud to stand with all of them.

Much remains to be done. But we will continue to walk each step of the way with those who work and risk for peace. We will press forward with our efforts until the circle of peace is closed, a circle which must include Syria and Lebanon if peace is to be complete. We will not rest until Muslims and Jews can turn their backs to pray without any fear, until all the region's children can grow up untouched by conflict, until the shadow of violence is lifted from the land of light and gold.

Thank you very much.

*[At this point, the Israeli-Palestinian West Bank Accord was signed. Following the signing, King Hussein of Jordan, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Chairman Yasser Arafat of the PLO, and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel made remarks.]*

*The President.* As we adjourn, let me once again thank all of our guests from across the

world who have come here to be a part of this and to wish all the parties well. Let me thank those who spoke today for their contributions to the peace process.

Let me say a special word of thanks to the Members of Congress who have come here from both parties, including both Jewish-Americans and Arab-Americans represented in our United States Congress, for their support of the United States effort.

And let me close with this simple thought. As the cold war has given way to a global village in which the enemies of peace are many and dispersed all across the world, the United States is honored and obligated to be a force for peace, from Northern Ireland to Southern Africa, from Bosnia to Haiti, to reducing the nuclear threat and the threat of biological and chemical weapons to fighting against terrorism and organized crime.

But this is special, for it is in this place that those of us who believe that the world was created by, is looked over by, and ultimately will be accountable to one great God. All of us came from there, whether we find that wisdom in the Torah or the Koran or the Christian Holy Bible. If we could all learn in that place to find the secret of peace, then perhaps the dream of peace on Earth can truly be realized.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:23 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of Israel; Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazin), head of the PLO committee on negotiations; Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez of Spain, representing the European Union; Prime Minister Abdellatif Filali of Morocco; Prime Minister Zayd Bin Shakir of Jordan; and Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev of Russia.

## Remarks at a Reception for Heads of State September 28, 1995

Thank you very much. On behalf of the First Lady and myself, the Vice President and Mrs. Gore, and Secretary Christopher, we are delighted to welcome all of our visitors from around the world and especially from the Mid-

dle East, the Prime Ministers, the Foreign Ministers, especially Mrs. Rabin and Mrs. Arafat, Mrs. Mubarak, and Her Majesty Queen Noor.

We are delighted to be here again with these four great leaders who have just spoken. I was